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Lucia A Keegan 10/11/2006 09:51:38 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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Text:

UNCLAS SENSITIVE PARIS 06615

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DISSEMINATION: UNESCOX  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:LOLIVER  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 006615

SIPDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR OLIVER TO A/S POWELL

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [UNESCO](#) [KPAO](#)  
SUBJECT: USUNESCO - A/S POWELL VISIT: PD SCENESETTER

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: I am looking forward to your October 23 and 24 visit to UNESCO, and would like to suggest that UNESCO with its education, communication and culture mandates is the ideal platform to advance the Secretary's transformational diplomacy agenda. In this regard, I would like you to consider raising a number of potential Public Diplomacy initiatives during your meeting with the UNESCO Director-General, Koichiro Matsuura on October 24. I would also welcome press guidance on education issues in order to effectively engage with the press during and on the margins of the Fulbright New Century Scholars Plenary Session. The multiplier effect for PD at UNESCO is huge given the fact that 192 member states belong to UNESCO. Many of their Ambassadors come from Education or Cultural ministries, which provides a unique opportunity for outreach to an elite that is often skeptical of the United States. Moreover, ECA's programs directly link to the Mission's top priority of education reform, as well as democracy building and our active leadership as a member of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. END SUMMARY.

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UNESCO'S MIDDLE NAMES ARE EDUCATION AND CULTURE:  
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¶2. (U) I propose 4 ways in which ECA could consider bridging with UNESCO through educational exchanges and cultural promotion: the Fulbright Senior Specialists Program to increase U.S. influence in the organization's thinking and approach to programs and budget, the Fulbright Teacher Exchange to provide teacher training in countries where UNESCO has a strong record on educational reform, the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation to annually fund a project chosen jointly by the U.S. Mission and UNESCO's World Heritage Center, and ECA Cultural Programming in the visual arts to promote American achievement in film during the 2007 General Conference, when over 190 Education and Cultural Ministers as well as Heads of State from around the world converge at UNESCO. These

ideas go beyond publicizing these programs at UNESCO, which we already do.

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FULBRIGHT PROGRAMS:  
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13. (U) I am currently negotiating with UNESCO to bring on board 5-10 Fulbright Senior Specialist Fellows, starting in May 2007 for periods of up to 6 weeks. UNESCO sectors have responded keenly to the possibility, with requests for experts in media law, curriculum assessment, program evaluation, bioethics law, oceanographic issues, and statistics evaluation. All of these fields link directly to our priorities and support Department Transformational Diplomacy goals, whether it is correctly measuring the impact of literacy programs through teaching people in developing countries how to interpret statistics, or helping to build a database of media law for post-conflict countries to draw on when they draft legislation on freedom of expression. Ideally, we would like to complete an agreement with UNESCO before mid-October so that A/S Powell may announce this initiative to the DG. UNESCO, as host institution, can offer workspace and subsidized lunches. UNESCO Management is looking into whether it can support housing costs for Fulbright Senior Specialists in the field or at Paris Headquarters, though I believe this support may be extremely limited due to UNESCO's zero-no-growth budget. I ask that your office consider identifying resources to cover housing expenses here in Paris and in the field in order to place fellows from this valuable program at UNESCO.

14. (U) Introducing the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program to UNESCO in order to promote teacher training would demonstrate in practical terms U.S. leadership on education reform, complement the First Lady's role as UNESCO Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations Decade of Literacy and capitalize on the enormous public success of the First Lady's September 18 White House Conference on Global Literacy. This exchange could occur in countries that have made progress on education reform, in the pilot program countries of UNESCO's Literacy for Life initiative, or in the 5 countries which will host follow-on conferences to the First Lady's September 18 Literacy Conference. The experiences of these teachers could be shared with UNESCO field offices. They could also yield best practices to be shared publicly at the five planned UNESCO follow-on literacy conferences, which would underscore the power that people-to-people exchanges have in promoting literacy in the developing world. In the cases in which this important Fulbright program already exists in chosen countries, this Teacher Exchange Program could build upon or supplement existing programs; perhaps it could be identified as a specific U.S.-UNESCO program.

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CULTURAL INITIATIVES:  
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15. (U) The Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation is another field with great potential for cooperation at UNESCO. For the past two years, I have sent the program's annual report and a letter to all of my colleagues notifying them of it and encouraging them to apply through the U.S. Embassy in their home country. Responses have been very positive. For example, South Africa, Chile, Equatorial Guinea, Paraguay have all expressed appreciation for the information, been delighted to learn of projects in their home countries (the South African Ambassador praised the U.S. for its cooperation with African countries to preserve Africa's cultural richness as a whole) and noted the program's potential for capacity building, training and site management. I ask you to consider building on the existing program by allowing the Mission to choose one endangered World Heritage site per year in conjunction with the UNESCO World Heritage Center for Ambassador's Fund support. Results of the annual project could be shared with the World Heritage Committee to encourage best practices for site management.

16. (U) From October 15 to November 1, 2007, UNESCO will host its biannual General Conference, and welcome Education and Cultural Ministers as well as Heads of State from around the world. This is an ideal opportunity to, in keeping with the First Lady's Global Cultural Initiative, showcase American Film. UNESCO Ambassadors are a jaded lot - with 190 peers deploying their full cultural arsenal month after month, it can be hard to keep their attention. However,

a classic American Film presented in UNESCO's Conference Hall by a leading celebrity at UNESCO would be a showstopper - and would attract celebrity UNESCO Ambassadors such as Sidney Poitier (Bahamas) and Charles Aznavour (Armenia), in town for the General Conference, and potentially Goodwill Ambassadors such as Claudia Cardinale (Italy) and Catherine Deneuve (France). In May, I presented remarks on cooperation in popular culture at the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities Symposium on Film, Television, Digital Media and Popular Culture in Los Angeles, and met there with American Film Institute (AFI) leaders, who indicated an interest in cooperation with Mission on programs.

17. (U) These program suggestions would help the U.S. further improve its standing within the UNESCO diplomatic community and increase our influence and leadership at UNESCO. Our efforts to do so are of particular importance as we are the Vice Chair of UNESCO's policy setting Executive Board, where we are preparing for the 2007 General Conference which will set the UNESCO Agenda from 2008 to 2013 in its medium term strategy - a document we are negotiating now. We are also continuing to have problems with certain individuals at UNESCO who try to promote anti-Americanism and ignorance over American goals and priorities in key UNESCO sectors.

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PRESS AT THE NCS PLENARY:  
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18. (U) As we approach the Fulbright New Century Scholars (NCS) Plenary on October 24, I have noticed an up tick in press play and in policy moves among some UNESCO staff on the issue of education as a public good. For example, there were recent reports in the media that Belgian officials, at the September 28 annual meeting of French speaking countries worldwide (the Francophonie), called for a UNESCO instrument modeled on the 2005 cultural diversity convention to ensure education is exempt from established international trade laws. Since the NCS Plenary discusses private-public partnerships and equitable access to education, Mission would encourage ECA to reach out to scholars who support private education, and ask them to consider doing some press pull asides to explain their views. Mission would also ask ECA to coordinate with IO/PPC, IO/UNESCO, USTR and the Department of Education to proactively draft press guidance addressing this issue and the related issue of non-binding cross border education guidelines that were jointly negotiated by UNESCO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

19. (U) I am so pleased that you have chosen to hold the NCS plenary at UNESCO headquarters, the only UN agency with a mandate for education, and am very appreciative of your willingness to meet UNESCO Ambassadors and the Director-General on the margins of the NCS conference. I hope that you may be able to explore with the Director-General the synergies outlined above between ECA programs and UNESCO's mandate. I also hope that by proactively showing the richness of views and scholars to the press at the NCS plenary, we can open more minds at UNESCO, including those of many Francophones and representatives of the developing world, to the merits of protecting the diversity of education systems and providers worldwide.

Oliver